

**California Department of Conservation
Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program**

2002 FIELD REPORT

COUNTY: Riverside (East)

FIELD MAPPER(S): Michael Kisko

IMAGERY:

source: Air Photo USA

date: February 2002

scale: 2 foot resolution

film type: true color

coverage gaps: Palo Verde and Salton Sea areas lacked high resolution information

additional imagery: Landsat TM data (2002) used in Palo Verde and Salton Sea areas

WRITTEN, DIGITAL & ORAL INFORMATION SOURCES: *Please list which local governments, interest groups, or individuals submitted comments on the 2000 maps. Also list all phone and in-person contacts made or related GIS data referenced while conducting the 2002 update.*

➤ *local review comments*

cities: Palm Desert

county:

others: Palo Verde Irrigation District

➤ *personal contacts:* none

➤ *websites:*

Welcome to Riverside County, California: <http://www.co.riverside.ca.us/>

Riverside County, Golf Capital of America: <http://www.greatgolf.org/>

Desert Resorts Regional Airport: <http://www.desertresortsair.com/default.htm>

➤ *GIS data referenced:*

SWIS landfill/waste facility reference file: SWIS.dgn

2000-2002 CHANGES*: *Please summarize the most common changes to the maps. List representative locations (quads) of each type of change encountered. Make sure to list and describe particularly large, unusual or notable changes and give estimates of the acreage involved.*

Note: This is the first digital update for Riverside County. Using improved digital resources, more accurate boundaries were drawn throughout the county. Therefore, adjustments were made in all categories throughout the county. The

changes listed below are only representative of the total number of actual changes.

➤ **Irrigated Farmland to Urban Land**

There were 15 conversions of irrigated farmland to urban land this update. The majority of the conversions (9) were seen in the Coachella Valley area in the form of new homes, often associated with golf courses. For example, new homes were seen in the form of an expanded Sun City Palm Desert (~200 acres). In the La Quinta area, a new golf course community called “The Hideaway” was added (~150 acres). A couple of other conversions in the La Quinta area included a new shopping center with a Ralph’s supermarket (~10 acres) and a development of new homes across the street (~35 acres).

Meanwhile, in the San Jacinto area near Park Hill, new homes were seen in the Mont Valier II and Summerfield housing developments (~35 acres) with another ~50 acres of new homes in evidence to the east of Park Hill.

➤ **Local, Grazing or Other Land to Urban Land**

There were 79 changes from local, grazing, or other land to urban land this update. Almost two-thirds of these conversions took place in the Coachella Valley area and, again, were primarily seen in the form of new homes and new and expanded golf course communities. First, two areas of new homes (~60 acres) were added in the Cathedral City area with another ~50 acres of homes added in the Rancho Mirage area. Next, in the La Quinta area, ~70 acres of new homes were added adjacent to the new John Glenn Middle School (~40 acres). Also in La Quinta, the “Tradition” G.C.C. (golf course community) was expanded seemingly to completion (~150 acres) and a golf course community called “The Quarry at La Quinta” (~250 acres) was added just to the south of Lake Cahuilla. In Indian Wells, the addition of the Mountain Cove G.C.C. was the source of the urbanization of ~100 acres of land. Finally, the build-out of a large golf course community in the Palm Desert area, just east of Ironwood Country Club was a conversion of approximately 400 acres of land.

Urbanization was also in evidence in the southwestern portion of the Indio area where two areas of new homes totaling ~80 acres were added. In the Thermal area, the Desert Resorts Regional Airport (formerly the Thermal Airport) runways were added due to their repaving and our improved imagery this update. Finally, in the Mecca area, the Las Mananitas development (~25 acres) was also added which provides housing to local farmworkers.

Notable examples of urbanization outside the Coachella Valley area included the build-out of a new home development north of Cherry Valley at the county line (~75 acres). Further, in-between Beaumont and Cherry Valley, ~35 acres of new homes were added adjacent to a golf course. In the midst of the Beaumont/Banning area, ~60 acres of new homes were added and a large golf course community south of I-10 was expanded (~70 acres). Meanwhile, in the Valle Vista area, more new homes were added in the form of the “Rivercrest” development (~50 acres).

Finally, the urbanization of local, grazing, or other land was also seen in some of the outlying, less developed portions of the county. One example includes the new Hamilton School and community library in the Community of Anza (~30 acres). The Jojoba Hills

SKP Resort (~55 acres) and the build-out of the Rancho California RV Resort with golf course (~60 acres) near Aguanga were also notable examples. Finally, the Palo Verde College (~30 acres) was added on the Palo Verde Mesa.

➤ **Irrigated Farmland to Local or Grazing Land**

There were 98 instances of the conversion of irrigated farmland to local or grazing land this update. Approximately half of these conversions occurred in the Coachella Valley area. These conversions were due to areas of irrigated farmland having been fallow for 3 or more update cycles. The fallow farmland on Prime and Statewide soils was converted to Farmland of Local Importance as per Riverside County's Farmland of Local Importance definition. Meanwhile, fallow farmland on lesser quality soils was converted to Grazing Land (if the plot was >40 acres).

The first notable example of irrigated farmland that was converted to local or grazing land was a ~125-acre plot adjacent to the northern urban fringe of the Beaumont/Banning area. Next, adjacent to Sun City Palm Desert, two areas of fallow farmland totaling ~340 acres were converted to Farmland of Local Importance. Conversion of a ~170-acre plot in neighboring La Quinta was another notable instance of fallow farmland.

The Indio quad, which covers portions of the Indio, La Quinta, and Coachella areas, exhibited the most conversions of irrigated farmland to local or grazing land with 26 conversions taking place this update. For example, in the Indio area, three plots of fallow farmland totaling ~200 acres were converted from irrigated farmland. Three plots of fallow farmland totaling ~140 acres in the southern Indio/La Quinta area were another notable conversion. Finally, a ~200-acre plot of fallow farmland south of Indio along Jackson St. was another significant conversion of irrigated farmland.

Lastly, not far to the east of the Diamond Valley Reservoir, a ~280-acre plot of fallow farmland was a significant conversion from irrigated farmland.

➤ **Irrigated Farmland to Other Land**

There were 23 conversions of irrigated farmland to other land this update. The majority of these conversions were due to the fallowing of small parcels of unique farmland (<40 acres). These parcels are put into the Other Land category since they are not large enough (>40 acres) for the Grazing Land category and fallow farmland on Unique soils does not qualify for Farmland of Local Importance under the county's definition. The remaining conversions were primarily due to the identification of low-density residential housing (ranchettes), farmsteads, agricultural staging areas, and small bodies of water.

➤ **Local, Grazing or Other Land to Irrigated Farmland**

There were 41 conversions of local, grazing, or other land to irrigated farmland this update. These additions involved mostly small areas of new irrigated farmland scattered throughout the county in the form of row crops or orchards such as citrus in the Hemet or Blackburn Canyon areas or new date palm orchards in the Coachella Valley. New nurseries were also in evidence throughout the county. Notable examples of new irrigated farmland include a ~115-acre plot in the Coachella area and the addition of a ~300-acre plot of irrigated farmland on the Palo Verde Mesa.

➤ **UNUSUAL:** *Category changes, complications with the Farmland of Local Importance definition, or any other special circumstances in 2002.*

Local, Grazing to Other Land: There were 26 conversions. These conversions were primarily the result of the addition of ranchettes and aggregate mining operations. Other conversions were due to motocross racing areas, aquaculture ponds, horse track areas, and small water bodies.

Prime, Statewide to Unique: There were 7 conversions. These conversions were primarily due to the identification of container nurseries along with some soil boundary corrections.

Other to Urban: In the Mission Creek area to the west of Desert Hot Springs, an area of fenced, recharge ponds which are part of the Desert Water Recharge Program (~110 acres) were added.

PROBLEM AREAS: *What locations and map categories need careful checking in 2004? Why?*

The Palo Verde area may need to be field checked next update as I did not have sufficient time to venture out to the area this update.

LABOR ESTIMATE: *Please estimate the amount of time spent on the following tasks.*

photo interpretation, start date: 11/15/02

photo interpretation, number of days: 12

ground truthing dates: 12/9/02-12/13/02

days for map compilation and clean up: 17

* **Note:** **Irrigated Farmland** = Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance or Unique Farmland; **Local** = Farmland of Local Importance

Further information on the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program can be found at:

www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp